



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1350.0 - Australian Economic Indicators, Jan 1998

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 21/01/1998

Feature Article - Australian Tourism Satellite Account: Development Commences

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important activity in Australia and its importance to many regions in Australia, and the country as a whole, continues to grow. In recognition of this situation and in response to specific calls for information on the economic impacts of tourism, the ABS, in conjunction with the Department of Industry, Science and Tourism (DIST) and the Bureau of Tourism Research (BTR), has commenced development of an Australian Tourism Satellite Account (ATSA).

The feature article in this month's AEI introduces the concept of a tourism satellite account and discusses a number of important issues in measurement of tourism effects. The feature article was first presented as a conference paper to the Asia Pacific Tourism Association Conference, September 1996. Since then, the joint funding of the ATSA project by DIST and the ABS has been announced. Currently work is proceeding on the collection of data for the ATSA with the reference year of the account to be 1997-98.

INFORMATION TO BE CONTAINED IN THE ATSA

The ATSA will provide a detailed data set on the economic aspects of tourism and be based on, and have close links to, the Australian National Accounts. In particular, the ATSA will provide the information to enable a detailed evaluation of tourism's contribution to the national economy. Further, through the use of national accounts concepts, it will enable the economic aspects of tourism to be compared with those of the more traditional industries which are identified in those accounts. For example, it will measure value added, capital expenditure and employment which results from tourism demand, in a way which is compatible with such measures in the national accounts. Importantly, the ATSA will enable assessment of the direct and indirect effects of tourism demand on the economy as a whole.

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE

Completion and release of the account is scheduled for September 2000. The ABS believes that the completion of this account will provide an invaluable source of information for tourism policy makers, researchers and analysts and, more broadly, will provide experience in the use of satellite accounts which can be an important new tool in economic analysis.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information relating to the development of the ATSA, contact John Joisce, Director, National Accounts Research Section, ABS on telephone (02) 6252 6170 or facsimile (02) 6252 5380.

This page last updated 8 December 2006

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